



NEW WAYS TO COMMUNICATE REACHING OUT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

The past few years have brought about major changes in the way people communicate. The telephone, once the primary method for two-way communications, has given way to smart phones, iPads and computer notebooks. Through these new technologies, the City can provide enhanced services and create more efficient ways to connect with residents and businesses 24/7/365.

Social media – [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#) – provide additional avenues for two-way communication and increase transparency. The City can communicate with residents using their preferred method. The City’s social media pages, combined with existing communication tools, will also allow for greater and faster access to City news and information.

“From road closures to special events, our social media pages will keep users informed,” Communications Administrator Janine Hill said. “We hope to connect with a much wider audience using these online tools.”

Since the City’s Facebook page was activated in February, almost 400 people have become “fans” of the City. The City’s Twitter page has 154 followers.

WEBSITE KEYWORDS: SOCIAL MEDIA.



ONLINE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

The City’s wide variety of “[E-Tools](#)” allows you to find answers to specific issues at any time of the day. To date, more than 4,700 people have signed up with [E-Subscribe](#). In 2010, [Ask the City](#) served nearly 6,000 individuals. In addition, the City’s website traffic soared in 2010 with a record 474,160 unique visitors.

MAKING CONNECTIONS THE TIES THAT BIND OUR CITY TOGETHER

All successful communities have at least one thing in common: they never let themselves stagnate. That’s why, to meet the ever-changing needs of the community, the City of Bloomington remains focused on its strategic vision, *“To build and renew the community by providing services, promoting renewal and guiding growth in a sustainable and fiscally sound manner.”*

As an organization, the City connects with people through the services it provides, whether that service is implementing a new 911 system that expedites emergency calls or constructing better roads to make travel easier and safer.

Here are just a few examples of how the City is connecting to its residents, neighborhoods and businesses through technology, services, renewal and community building.

WHEN THE CONNECTION IS CRITICAL ENHANCING OUR 911 EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICE

Advances in cell phone technology have greatly changed the way 911 dispatchers perform their jobs. Ten years ago, less than 20 percent of the 911 calls that came into Bloomington Police Dispatch were made on cell

phones. Today, the number of 911 calls that originate from cell phones is almost 70 percent.

To keep up with new cell phone technology and call volume, the City implemented “Power 911” – an integrated



workstation that provides dispatchers with touch-screen control of both landline and wireless calls in a wide variety of call environments.

“Prior to the new system, dispatchers had to hand-dial 911 hang-ups and call transfers, which was not only time-

consuming, but prone to error,” Sergeant Jeff Schwiesow said.

“Calls made by cell phones were sometimes difficult to trace and required the dispatcher to hand-dial service providers to obtain a caller’s location. That took up valuable time.”

“The new system is a time-saver and possibly a lifesaver when it comes to connecting people to the help they need,” Schwiesow said.

The new 911 system transforms the way dispatchers respond to calls by increasing efficiency and consistency through one-click contact buttons. Multilingual support, call histories, police officer requests and cell phone traces are now just a touch of a screen away.

ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS BRING NEIGHBORS TOGETHER

City events and programs foster community connections and are at the heart of life in Bloomington.

Events such as National Night Out, Summer Fete, River Rendezvous and many others make Bloomington the community it is today. Here’s a look at some of the City’s most popular events and programs.

Designed to heighten awareness of crime and drug prevention and generate support for local anti-crime programs, National Night Out (NNO) sees record attendance each year and is an important community-building event. Last year’s NNO resulted in 372 neighborhood parties.

The Farmers Market, with 21 market days, averages 2,000 people each week with a total estimated attendance of 42,000 each season. *See page CR3.*

“Community gardens have been sprouting up in Bloomington this past spring. The gardens are helping residents find new ways to create a homegrown community at Smith and Harrison parks,” Center for the Arts Manager Jim Urie said.

Other community events and programs, including Winter Fete, Heritage Days, Arts in the Parks activities and concerts, and Center for the Arts cultural programs, bring quality to our lives and foster pride in our community.



The Police and Fire Departments went to a 24-hour dispatching system.

1958



1960

The I-35W and I-494 interchange opened to the public.



1962

Lindbergh Terminal at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport opened to the public.